

DEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES **January 18, 2017**

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Susan Butler, Chair
Steve Bilafer
Kevin Coughlin
Lisa Laprade
Tom Ryan (arrived 7:07pm)
Tracey White

MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ABSENT:

Mayanne Briggs, Vice-Chair

MEMBERS OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRESENT:

Michael J. Welch, Superintendent
Dr. Ian Kelly, Assistant Superintendent
Samuel Rippin, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance

Meeting Location: Avery Elementary School

Meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Recognitions

Dr. Kelly recognized the Ahl Family and the Nicole M. Ahl Memorial Fund for the very generous donation of books valued at \$6,443.26. The books will be provided to all preschool through grade 5 classes.

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the donation of books from the Ahl family to the elementary schools; Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Student Update

Evan Landry provided the Committee with a recap of ongoing activities happening throughout the Dedham Public Schools. Events included spirit weeks, assemblies, social skills development, technology improvements, visits by Dr. Kelly to the elementary schools and Link Crew study sessions.

Superintendent's Update

Supt. Welch is in the process of conducting mid-year reviews with all Central Office Administrative staff and building principals. The reviews include progress regarding supervision and evaluation of faculty and staff. Supt. Welch reported that in the first 80 days of the school year evaluators conducted 285 unannounced observations, 51 “walk-through” observations, and 74 full announced observations.

Yesterday afternoon about 50 DPS educators and administrators participated in the Aspiring Leaders Academy seminar at the MIT Endicott House. The presenter was Dr. Kristan Rodriguez who presented some of her work regarding UDL - Universal Design for Learning.

Tonight, Assistant Supt. Mr. Sam Rippin will present the FY18 Proposed Budget. Supt. Welch thanked Mr. Rippin and his office staff for their work in putting together tonight’s proposal.

Supt. Welch reminded the Committee that the date for the SBRC community meeting regarding the upcoming work at the former Dexter Elementary School site has been moved to February 7.

The “State of the Schools Address” was held on Wednesday, January 11. Last night, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh delivered his “State of the City Address”. One aspect of Mayor Walsh’s speech was his call for free, high-quality public pre-school for all 4-year-olds in the Boston Public Schools.

Supt. Welch met with a superintendent consultancy hosted by Nick Covino, president of William James College along with the Director of Teachers 21, John D’Auria. Discussions included ongoing issues with budgets, state trends, and best practices.

Supt. Welch attended the monthly TEC Superintendent’s Meeting. He heard a presentation from the Highlander Institute regarding on-going work around consulting and coaching of teachers.

Supt. Welch met with Father Wayne Belschner, the new pastor at St. Mary’s Church in Dedham. They discussed the work the church is doing through the Life Teen program.

The Administrative Leadership Team completed its third set of Instructional Rounds at the Greenlodge School. Teams of 2 to 3 administrators made 24 separate visits to classrooms and shared observations about trends regarding student engagement.

Supt. Welch met with a group of 8th grade students affiliated with the Community Problem Solving Team. They are working to put on a Science Fair for students in grades 3 through 6 to be held at Dedham Middle School on March 31st. They will be working with Science Department Head Linda Kobierski.

On January 6, Supt. Welch met as a member of the Schools to Careers Board of Directors to hear more about their upcoming work with member districts. Through the collaborative work of STC and DPS Elementary Curriculum Coordinator Deb Gately,

Dedham has been able to secure almost \$15,000 in grant funding for Science supplies in elementary classrooms.

Supt. Welch met with five ECEC teachers, Mike Williams from KBA Architects, and members of their playground design consultant to discuss the parameters and of the pre-school and kindergarten playgrounds at the new ECEC.

DHS Principal Ron McCarthy and Athletic Director Steve Traister held a meeting with leaders from the youth sports programs to find ways to work more closely. The meeting was a result of conversations that occurred around the move to the Tri-Valley League.

The date for the School Department's FY18 Capital Budget presentation to the Capital Expenditures Committee will be on January 23.

Tomorrow Supt. Welch will be attending the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents' Mid-Winter Convening.

Ms. Butler asked if she could be provided with a brief summary of the conversations that occurred between DHS and the youth sports leagues.

Reports

FY18 Budget Review by Asst. Supt. for Business Sam Rippin

Mr. Rippin provided the Committee with a presentation on the proposed FY18 Operating Budget. All members of the Committee have been provided with a budget book. The presentation of the operating budget is available on the DPS website.

Mr. Rippin reviewed the timeline of the budget process.

Supt. Welch read an expert from his letter included in the budget books:

The FY18 Superintendent's Proposed Budget includes requests that align with our Strategic Improvement Plan and the School Committee's priorities outlined in their goals for the 2017-18 school year including:

- A commitment to progress toward fully funding cost-free, full day Kindergarten for all students in Dedham
- The continued investment in district special education programming and services to maintain students in-district and minimize the costly expense of transportation and out-of-district placements
- Expansion of individualized learning through continued investment in technology and 1:1 student access

Mr. Rippin described the guidelines he followed while developing the budget. They included:

- Level funding of Chapter 70 by the State
- Complete transition (FY16-FY18) to free full day Kindergarten

- Developing a budget that adequately funds regular and special education programs and services
- Programs and services supported by fees/tuition/donations/private grants will continue to require this outside funding except full day kindergarten as previously noted
- Continue to identify efficiencies that provide service in more cost-effective ways
- Provide relief for families with respect to fees by reducing both AP Exam and HS Athletic Fees
- Support the recruitment, hiring and retention of high quality teachers, support staff and administrators through the planned re-structuring
- Provide adequate classroom supplies, equipment, and professional development opportunities to support all educational programs
- Find curriculum development and renewal along with related professional development

Mr. Rippin discussed the four major budget drivers:

1. Special Education and Out of District Tuition – the budget reflects a \$500,000 reduction in out of district placement due to services keeping students in district
2. Investment in Early Education and Fee Reduction-elimination of full day kindergarten fees, reduction in athletic fees and AP exam fees
3. Other Non-Personnel - includes new bussing contract, increase in daily substitute teachers, classroom supplies and materials, and curriculum materials
4. Personnel - 2.5 new positions in the technology department and contractual obligations

The school operating budget requests an increase of 3.92%

Facilities budget (which is voted separately by the finance committee) is requesting an increase of 4.09%

The Facilities budget drivers included contractual obligations, reduction in heating and electricity, playground maintenance, fields maintenance, and the upgrading of a maintenance position for a foreman.

Mr. Rippin noted more than 3/4 of the operating budget is going to direct classroom instruction.

Discussion and Questions for the Committee

Mr. Bilafer, Chair of the Budget Subcommittee, stated the subcommittee had voted to recommend this budget proposal to the full Committee. He supports the goal of the budget to move toward free, full day kindergarten as well as a reduction in fees.

Mr. Coughlin agreed with Mr. Bilafer's statements regarding full day kindergarten and reduction in fees.

Mr. Ryan also agreed with both gentlemen and went on to note that 83% of the budget is going toward payroll and 17% toward operating the schools with 75% going toward direct instruction.

Ms. Laprade noted she was in support of full day kindergarten, but inquired if the current ECEC had the space to accommodate it and will it be mandatory. Supt. Welch replied that there is capacity to accommodate full day kindergarten right now. Further discussion will have to occur by the Committee as to whether it becomes mandatory. Supt. Welch went on to display graphs showing the trend toward full day kindergarten in Dedham and throughout the state.

Ms. Butler asked Dr. Kelly to explain 'metrics' and what are they used for in education. Dr. Kelly explained metrics as a monitoring tool to determine if the curriculum is being effective. At this time there is no universal screening to help measure instruction to help teachers make decisions.

Mr. Butler asked if the school and town were pooling utilities for savings. Mr. Rippin stated they were.

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Rippin to review the Instructional Salaries graph again. Mr. Rippin explained how 75.37% of the operating budget is going to direct instruction.

Mr. Rippin and Supt. Welch reviewed additional slides including enrollment history from 1993-2017, demographics, class sizes and kindergarten enrollment.

Supt. Welch reviewed slides of athletic fees and trends in the number of students taking AP exams. He is looking for a scaled reduction in AP fees - \$50 for the first exam, \$25 for the second and free for the 3rd or more.

Mr. Rippin reviewed the upcoming bus contract bid for FY18 through 2020. He is requesting an increase of \$100,500 to cover expenses including the move to the Tri-Valley League, the need for an additional bus and the installation of cameras (security system.)

Supt. Welch noted that all data and information regarding the conversion of resources for the district restructuring are available on the DPS website.

Supt. Welch displayed a slide of the number of employees who enroll in town health benefits. Two-thirds of employees accept health benefits, one-third do not. Only 40% of Paraprofessionals and 41% of Food Service workers take town benefits.

Ms. Laprade inquired if we are eligible for the state grant for kindergarten tuition. Mr. Rippin answered that this grant has been eliminated from the state budget.

Old/New Business

Follow up Discussion on the "State of the School Address"

Supt. Welch noted that postings for all open positions would be advertised in the Boston Globe this Sunday, January 22. An informational brochure will be going out to all schools within a 20 mile radius of Dedham. Additional Title I positions have also been posted. Supt. Welch is continuing to have meetings and conversations with staff to answer any questions about the restructuring.

Supt. Welch is looking for search committee members for the Middle School Principal and Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services positions.

Supt. Welch will be meeting with members from Lectio and staff from the ECEC this Friday regarding early childhood literacy.

Ms. Laprade inquired if there has been a replacement for the Reading block. Supt. Welch stated that the staff at DMS has been working on a revised schedule. A committee has been formed and meetings have occurred.

Ms. Laprade inquired if there has been any conversation regarding creative scheduling for long blocks. Supt. Welch knows the committee has discussed flex blocks as well as instrumental music during the day. The Scheduling Committee held a meeting this afternoon which he had not yet received feedback on.

Ms. Laprade asked for clarification on Melissa Pearrow's question regarding how state and national guidelines were being used to develop the curriculum.

Dr. Kelly replied that the State standards are built off of the national standards. These standards have all been compiled and placed in maps. The core content for the curriculum is based off the state standards.

Ms. Laprade asked how we will know if what we are doing will be successful.

Dr. Kelly replied that we will use metrics and universal assessments to monitor progress and determine where changes need to be made.

Ms. Butler asked if the metric assessment would be part of the budget. Dr. Kelly answered that the universal screening product would be outsourced.

Ms. Butler inquired regarding to whom the teachers would now report. Dr. Kelly said the teachers would still report to the principals. Coaches are working solely as coaches. They will not be evaluating teachers.

Discussion and Vote on Cafeteria Workers Contract

Mr. Rippin announced that a 3 year agreement had been reached with the Cafeteria Workers for the time period of September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2019. It includes a cost of living adjustment and recognizes senior food service workers.

Supt. Welch added that Food Service has no impact on the Operating Budget. They are self-sustained.

Ms. Butler stated that vote had been taken in Executive Session to vote the contract agreement in an open meeting.

Mr. Ryan motioned to accept the negotiated agreement with the Cafeteria Workers, Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

2017-18 School Year Calendar Discussion

A brief five-question survey regarding the school calendar has been added to the School Committee folder. The questions seek opinions on starting school before Labor Day, observing the Jewish holidays, having a half day of school on the last day before December break, having a one week break in March instead of two vacation weeks (February and April) and having half day professional development on the same or different days of the week. Supt. Welch asked the Committee for feedback on the survey.

Ms Laprade is currently compiling data to see what the rest of the state is doing regarding the above-mentioned issues.

Mr. Ryan noted that the school year would need to be extended by two days if the Jewish holidays are observed.

Mr. Coughlin stated that some of these issues would need to be negotiated.

Minutes

Ms. White motioned to approve the minutes of January 4, 2017 as presented, Ms. Laprade second; the Committee voted 5-0 in favor. Mr. Coughlin abstained, as he was not in attendance on January 4.

Donations

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the donation of a \$5,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to the Dedham Middle School to support mural and painting classes, Mr. Ryan second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Mr. Bilafer motioned to accept with grateful appreciation a donation of \$1,000 from the Dedham Education Foundation to the Dedham Middle School to support a live hip-hop performance and after school enrichment; Ms. White second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Ms. White motioned to accept with grateful appreciation the donation of \$700 from the Dedham Middle School Parent Group to support the “Girls Empowerment through Art” program, Mr. Bilafer second; the Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Public Comment

None

Acknowledgements and Announcements

Ms. Laprade announced that Dianne Berry Preston had opportunities for community service through the Livable Dedham organization.

Ms. Butler stated she would like to have a presentation regarding DHS teaming at a future meeting.

Ms. White announced Dedham Middle School would be hosting an Open House for students in grades 3 through 6 next Tuesday. Due to short notice to parents, she inquired if another Open House could occur at a later date.

Ms. White announced that Oakdale School recently held a “Hero Day” which will be available to view on Dedham Cable.

Supt. Welch announced all the “State of the Schools Address” information is available on the main page of the DPS website.

Ms. Butler announced she would not be seeking reelection to the School Committee.

Mr. Ryan announced he also would not be seeking reelection to the School Committee.

Ms. White motioned to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Coughlin second; Committee voted 6-0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06pm